

Note: The areas of focus included on this version of the tool are not the only areas that are important in a curriculum. We have narrowed the list for the pilot process to those that are most commonly cited as characteristics of effective curricula (e.g., Duncan, Stephens-Burden, & Bickel, 1996; Kirby, 2001).

CPI Tool Kit: 2003-04/9-03

Key Points to Consider	A Question to Help You Assess Your Curriculum	List 1 or 2 Changes You Could Make to Enhance Your Curriculum (write NA if you don't need to make changes).
<p>Examining the link between activities and curriculum goals</p> <p>Another way to strengthen a curriculum is to ensure that the curriculum activities are well connected to the curriculum goals and objectives. Sometimes activities get included because educators have enjoyed using them in the past, participants liked them, etc. It is important to make sure each activity will help participants move closer to the desired goal of the curriculum.</p>	<p>Do the activities in your curriculum support your primary goals and objectives? (Refer to Part A for help with your response.)</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, definitely <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> No, not really <input type="checkbox"/> No, not at all </p>	
<p>Including instruction on the influence of social norms</p> <p>Numerous research studies show that social norms have a strong and direct influence on risk behaviors. Some researchers believe this is one of the most important factors to address in prevention programs. Social norms are behavioral expectations and standards that exist in a particular environment. These expectations and standards can then influence individuals' behavior. Social norms stem from peers, parents/other adults, the community, etc. Some approaches to changing norms at the individual level include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating a group to which participants identify that is supportive of the desired behavior (e.g., a peer group that assists with the program) ▪ Providing information about peers' attitudes and behaviors (e.g., conduct opinion polls and share data, have students engage in activities in which they share positive views about the behavior) ▪ Using opinion leaders to influence norms (e.g., recruit individuals who are formal or informal leaders to help facilitate) 	<p>Does your curriculum include activities to address social norms regarding sexual behavior, condom use, fatherhood, etc.? (Refer to Parts A & B for help with your response.)</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> 1 activity <input type="checkbox"/> 2 activities <input type="checkbox"/> 3 activities <input type="checkbox"/> 4 or more activities </p> <p>What activities do you currently use to influence norms?</p>	

Key Points to Consider	A Question to Help You Assess Your Curriculum	List 1 or 2 Changes You Could Make to Enhance Your Curriculum (write NA if you don't need to make changes).
<p>Including skill instruction</p> <p>To date, all the evidenced-based HIV and sex education curricula include instruction on skills (e.g., communication, refusal, negotiation, condom use). It is important to link the skill instruction to your behavioral goal. For example, if your goal is to help individuals who are having sex use condoms more effectively, then the skill instruction should focus on how to use condoms and how to negotiate with a partner for condom use.</p>	<p>Does your curriculum include activities to teach skills? (Refer to Parts A & B for help with your response.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 activity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 activities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 activities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 or more activities</p> <p>What skills do you currently teach?</p>	
<p>Assessing the type and amount of knowledge taught in your curriculum</p> <p>Increasing knowledge is important, but using a curriculum that is mostly knowledge-based will not lead to behavior changes. Individuals need some information, but they need a lot more to help them change behavior (e.g., skills, beliefs/attitudes, motivation, etc). Thus, the information provided in your curriculum should be accurate and it <i>should be directly linked to the behavioral goals of the curriculum</i>. Many programs place too much emphasis on knowledge, and provide information that is nice to know but that won't necessarily prepare individuals to make the desired behavior change. Focusing only on "essential" knowledge, and emphasizing other risk and protective factors such as norms, attitudes, and skills could enhance programs.</p>	<p>How would you describe the knowledge covered in your curriculum?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> All or most is essential knowledge for supporting the behavioral goals in our curriculum</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Some is essential but some is simply nice to know</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Most is simply nice to know and it really doesn't connect to our desired curriculum goals</p>	

Key Points to Consider	A Question to Help You Assess Your Curriculum	List 1 or 2 Changes You Could Make to Enhance Your Curriculum (write NA if you don't need to make changes).
<p>Ensuring the curriculum is of sufficient length</p> <p>One of the requirements for the RFA to be released later this year is that prevention education curricula must extend for at least 8 hours. This stems from research showing that shorter programs are not effective at changing behavior. All of the current evidence-based curricula (e.g., Making Proud Choices, Becoming a Responsible Teen) are 8 or more hours.</p>	<p>Does your curriculum have at least 8 hours of instruction?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we have ____ hrs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, we have ____ hrs</p>	
<p>Enhancing the quality of skill Instruction</p> <p>When teaching skills, the research on effective instructional practices supports the importance of these four steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Name the skill</i> and explain it in words (e.g., review the purpose, describe the different parts) • <i>Demonstrate the skill</i> (e.g., show students what it looks like and what it doesn't look like by giving examples of effective and ineffective uses) • <i>Provide opportunities for group practice</i> with feedback (e.g., responding to pressure lines) • <i>Provide opportunities for individual practice</i> with feedback (e.g., role play with input from observers) <p><i>Note:</i> Many program experts believe that participants should over-practice a skill so that it comes automatically in a real-life experience.</p>	<p>Do you use these four elements of effective skill instruction in your curriculum?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Name & explain</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Demonstrate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Group practice</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Individual practice</p> <p>Do you use all 4 elements for <i>each</i> skill you teach?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	

Key Points to Consider	A Question to Help You Assess Your Curriculum	List 1 or 2 Changes You Could Make to Enhance Your Curriculum (write NA if you don't need to make changes).
<p>Using a variety of interactive teaching strategies</p> <p>The education literature supports the use of active learning rather than passive approaches. One way to enhance the potential effectiveness of your curriculum is to look for opportunities to change the delivery of activities so that the lessons are more interactive (e.g., instead of having students individually read a case study, have them act it out and work in small groups to discuss it).</p> <p>The education literature also emphasizes the importance of using a variety of teaching strategies that address different learning styles. Many researchers identify seven types of learning styles, and provide guidance on what type of activities might be more effective for each style (<i>see Resource section for more information</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Linguistic</i>—potential activities: writing, reading, story telling, interviews ▪ <i>Logical/mathematical</i>—potential activities: solving problems, following step-by-step processes, doing experiments ▪ <i>Spatial/visual</i>—potential activities: drawing pictures, creating maps, performing demonstrations ▪ <i>Musical</i>—potential activities: analyzing songs, completing multimedia projects, writing song lyrics ▪ <i>Bodily/kinesthetic</i>—potential activities: role play, relay-type games ▪ <i>Interpersonal</i>—potential activities: group discussions, cooperative games, small group and paired activities ▪ <i>Intrapersonal</i>—potential activities: individual work, reflective or journal work, exploring Internet, goal setting 	<p>Does your curriculum use a variety of interactive teaching methods that address different learning styles? (Refer to your Parts A & B for help with your response.)</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, definitely <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> No, not really <input type="checkbox"/> No, not at all </p>	

Key Points to Consider	A Question to Help You Assess Your Curriculum	List 1 or 2 Changes You Could Make to Enhance Your Curriculum (write NA if you don't need to make changes).
<p>Using small groups/cooperative learning groups</p> <p>The literature on effective education practices supports the use of small group learning. There are many ways that you can enhance the effectiveness of your small group work. Here are 3 key areas to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The Task</i>--make sure it is clear, not too complex, and allows students to do something together so that all students interact on an equal or nearly equal basis ▪ <i>Group composition</i>—use smaller groups (4 or less) that are heterogeneous (diverse) ▪ <i>Monitoring groups</i>—circulate, listen, and assist as needed. Summarize in a large group afterwards. 	<p>When students work in small groups, does each student in the group have a defined role?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Most or all of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely or not at all <input type="checkbox"/> We don't use small groups</p> <p>When students work in small groups, is the group size limited to four or fewer students?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Most or all of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely or not at all <input type="checkbox"/> We don't use small groups</p> <p>When students work in small groups, does the curriculum include notes to remind the educators to circulate and check student progress?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Most or all of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely or not at all <input type="checkbox"/> We don't use small groups</p>	

Key Points to Consider	A Question to Help You Assess Your Curriculum	List 1 or 2 Changes You Could Make to Enhance Your Curriculum (write NA if you don't need to make changes).
<p>Looking at the relevance of the curriculum content and activities for your population</p> <p>There are numerous ways in which a curriculum could be modified to make it more relevant for your population. Very simple modifications focus on changing the names, language, situations, etc. represented in the materials (e.g., in role plays, stories, videos). These changes can address both cultural relevance and developmental appropriateness.</p> <p>Another level of modification could include adding culturally based concepts that are important in your population (e.g., respect, family), and linking these concepts to the behavioral goal of the curriculum. Further, activities could be added to reinforce material in the curriculum (e.g., featuring members of the community in role model stories—short, real-life stories that model a positive behavior or belief).</p> <p>Once changes have been made, it is helpful to ask staff members or individuals from the target population (or other educators who work with the population) to review the curriculum for cultural and/or developmental relevance. They often can identify other ways in which activities or the curriculum as a whole could be made more relevant.</p>	<p>Is your curriculum <i>culturally relevant</i> for the population (e.g., uses culturally-appropriate situations, give messages that are consistent with cultural values, uses activities that appeal/are of interest to the population)?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, definitely <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> No, not really <input type="checkbox"/> No, not at all </p> <p>Is your curriculum <i>developmentally relevant</i> for the population (e.g., uses age-appropriate situations, give age-appropriate messages, uses activities that appeal/are of interest to population)?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, definitely <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> No, not really <input type="checkbox"/> No, not at all </p>	



References

Duncan, A.N., Stephens-Burden, S., Bickel, A. (1996). Effective Comprehensive Programs: A Planning Guide. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Kirby (2001). Emerging answers: Research findings on programs to reduce teen pregnancy. Washington, DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.